CAMBRIDGE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting (Summer) **August 4, 2026**

Called for 5:00 p.m. and broadcast from the Media Arts Studio, 454 Broadway, Cambridge for the purpose of discussing the agenda items listed 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Members Present: Vice Chair Dube, Member Harding, Member Hudson, Member Jaikumar, Mayor Siddiqui, Member de Paula Santos, Chair Weinstein

Others Present: Dr. Heather Grace, Chief of Academics; Dr. Karyn Grace, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services; David Murphy, Superintendent of Schools; Desiree Phillips, Executive Director of Special Education; Rachel Skerritt, Attuned Education Partners

Chair Weinstein in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and read the call of the meeting.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call of members present: Member Jaikumar, PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui, ~~ABSENT~~; Member de Paula Santos, PRESENT, Vice Chair Dube, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Chair Weinstein, PRESENT

Mayor Siddiqui joined the meeting at 5:11 p.m.

1. Public Comment
The following individuals were heard:

- Chris Montero, Warren Road, **#26-125 and #26-178,** emphasized protections for immigrant students and educators and supported alternatives to high-stakes standardized testing for determining graduation readiness.
- Kathy Greeley, Erie Street, **#26-178**, opposed the reinstatement of high-stakes standardized testing and referenced the 2024 vote eliminating MCAS as a graduation requirement and emphasized the importance of flexibility in assessing diverse learners.
- Sheli Wortis, Berkshire Street, **#26-178**, opposed the Statewide Graduation Council's recommendations and emphasized the importance of providing students with multiple ways to demonstrate competency and progress.
- Jessie Wenning, Kinnaird Street, **#26-178**, opposed proposals to reinstate high-stakes testing through end-of-course assessments and emphasized local control and teacher agency in determining appropriate methods for assessing student learning.
- Nella LaRosa-Waters, Crescent Street, **#26-178**, expressed concern that the proposal would undermine the 2024 vote eliminating the MCAS graduation requirement and reduce local district control.
- Jess Goetz, Pemberton Street, **#26-177,** questioned the use of motions to direct Superintendent communications and suggested requesting reports from the Superintendent, while also encouraging clearer, plain-language communication in School Committee proceedings.

- Jia-Jing Lee, Second Street, **#26-161**, expressed concern about staff-directed timeouts becoming a routine removal from instruction and emphasized proactive student supports, staff training, collaboration, and adequate staffing.

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Vice Chair Dube, public comment was closed on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

Executive Secretary shared that there was one remaining public comment registrant who had not been heard.

On a motion by Member Harding , seconded by Vice Chair Dube, public comment was re-opened on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

The following individual was heard:

- Anne Coburn, Otis Street, **Superintendent's Consent Agenda,** commented on the district's special education services and related financial costs and encouraged the district to expand in-district supports, including consideration of Shore Educational Collaborative services for middle school students, and emphasized the need for systematic Tier Two instruction, coordinated districtwide policies, and investments that improve equitable outcomes for students.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Vice Chair Dube, public comment was closed on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

2. Student School Committee Report:

There was no report.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- June 16 2026, Regular Meeting
- June 18, 2026, Special Meeting
- June 25, 2026, Special Meeting
- July 10, 2026, Special Meeting

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Member Harding, the records were approved on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, ABSENT; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#26-125 Welcoming Community Ordinance – Member Jaikumar
WHEREAS: In accordance with the City of Cambridge's Welcoming Communities Ordinance, it is not within the purview nor mandate of the City of Cambridge nor of Cambridge Public Schools to enforce federal immigration law or seek the detention, transfer or deportation of Cambridge residents for civil immigration purposes, nor should CPS resources be expended toward that end; and
WHEREAS: While the City of Cambridge's Welcoming Communities Ordinance sets this policy, this is an issue about which there is considerable anxiety among Cambridge Public Schools stakeholders; now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That CPS will equally enforce the law and serve the public without consideration of immigration status, citizenship, national origin, race, or ethnicity; and

RESOLVED: That in accordance with city policy, CPS employees and officials may not inquire about the immigration status of any student, family member, community member, or any member of the public with whom they interact, except as required by 8 U.S.C. § 1373 or for the limited purpose of demonstrating the eligibility of a job applicant to work in the United States. No employee of the Cambridge Public Schools shall require a student or parent to provide information regarding their immigration or citizenship status to establish the student's residency in the district for enrollment purposes. If such information becomes known to an employee of the Cambridge Public Schools, such information shall not be kept or distributed, except as required by federal or state law or regulations, and shall have no bearing on the student's ability to register for school or the school's treatment of that student. Information collected regarding place of birth for the purpose of providing appropriate services to any student shall be used only for that purpose and not distributed further, except as required by federal or state law or regulation; and be it further
RESOLVED: That citizenship, immigration status, national origin, race, and ethnicity shall have no bearing on an individual's treatment by CPS employees or officials; and be it further
RESOLVED: That except in response to a judicial warrant or other court order, ICE agents shall not be allowed access to individuals in CPS facilities including district-provided transportation; and be it further
RESOLVED: That no officer or employee of the Cambridge Public Schools shall perform the functions of an immigration officer, whether pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1357(g) or any other law, regulation, or policy, whether formal or informal, except as required by federal or state law or regulations.

Chair Weinstein gave the floor to the motion-maker, **Member Jaikumar** who asked to table the motion again to the next meeting due to pending state legislation.

On a motion by Member Jaikumar, seconded by Member Hudson, **#26-125** was tabled to the next meeting on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, ABSENT; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7a. Superintendent's Update

The Superintendent will present to the school committee on various matters pertaining to the opening of the 2026 - 2027 school year, including follow up reports on items discussed by the Cambridge School Committee during the second half of the 2025 - 2026 school year. These brief updates will include:

(I) *Secondary math instruction, including Algebra course offerings to 8th and 9th grade students*
(II) *Developing guidance around appropriate use of technology and monitoring of screen time by students*
(III) *Specific efforts to prioritize literacy instruction across elementary grade levels*
(IV) *Upcoming public engagement and deliberations over the future use of 158 Spring Street*

Superintendent Murphy opened by thanking approximately 180 CPS staff members who worked throughout much of the summer to support summer programming, including CPS Scores, CPS Skills Boost, Summer Discovery, Student Services programming, and other partnerships. **Chair Weinstein** joined in thanking summer staff, the audiovisual/broadcast team, and the School Committee Office.

- **Secondary Math/Algebra:** Mr. Murphy addressed recent reports claiming that 60% of CRLS ninth graders were "retaking Algebra 1," stating that the figure was inaccurate. He noted that when middle-school math acceleration began in 2024, approximately 25% of ninth graders entered CRLS taking math beyond Algebra 1; that number has since doubled. He emphasized that the district never established a goal that all students complete Algebra 1 before entering high school and said the district will continue reviewing data and providing additional information to families and the community.
- **Screen Time/Instructional Technology:** Mr. Murphy reviewed findings from the district's screen-time report, noting that technology use is generally strategic and prudent but that greater intentionality and consistency are needed across schools. The district is developing grade-specific guidance, reviewing take-home device practices, strengthening communication with caregivers, limiting unnecessary technology use during lunch/recess, and addressing practices such as technology-based late-night assignment deadlines.

- **Vice Chair Dube** asked about the timeline. Mr. Murphy said guidance is expected to be available when educators return in late August, with feedback gathered from staff and a possible Committee update in September.
- **Member Hudson** encouraged the district to explain in simple terms what technology use looks like during a typical school day and to communicate related policies—screen time, AI, cell phones and devices—together and repeatedly to families.

- **Elementary Literacy:** Mr. Murphy reported encouraging preliminary literacy data and reiterated that elementary literacy will be the district's "first among equals" instructional priority. Planned work includes strengthening early literacy instruction, coordinating Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, expanding and refining tutoring and out-of-school supports, embedding literacy across content areas, aligning educator evaluation priorities, and strengthening family partnerships.
    - **Member Jaikumar** asked how the district will support current upper-school and high-school students who remain below grade level. Murphy emphasized continued intervention through graduation, maintaining high expectations, and providing more effective differentiated support, particularly for students with disabilities.
    - **Member Hudson** asked how the district will ensure that current literacy efforts produce sustained results, citing previous initiatives that had also reported early progress. Murphy emphasized consistency rather than repeatedly changing initiatives, data-grounded practices, effective execution, educator capacity and accountability, and stronger family engagement.
    - **Member Hudson** urged the district and Committee to focus on fewer initiatives and execute foundational priorities well. **Chair Weinstein** noted that the strategic planning process could help establish clearer priorities.
    - **Mayor Siddiqui** asked about literacy interventionists in summer programming and the Excel tutoring program. Murphy said interventionists had been incorporated into summer programming and results would be tracked during the school year. Excel tutoring will expand to Grade 2, maintain the same dosage, and offer additional seats at higher-need schools.
    - **Member Harding** stressed urgency, consistency and maintaining literacy as the district's top elementary instructional priority. Mr. Murphy agreed that literacy would remain the "first among equal" priorities.
    - **Member dePaula Santos** emphasized the literacy needs of students with disabilities. Murphy agreed that this group has the most pronounced achievement and growth gaps and said ELA and Special Education staff are working together on professional learning and instructional practices.
    - **Vice Chair Dube** asked about collaborative planning and development of a culturally responsive literacy progression. Mr. Murphy said additional information could be presented later, potentially through subcommittee discussions, and noted ongoing efforts to improve cross-departmental collaboration and professional learning.
- **158 Spring Street:** Mr. Murphy reported that the district has continued reviewing options for the former Kennedy-Longfellow building. After previously presenting seven possibilities, the administration expects to narrow the discussion to three specific options for public consideration early in the school year. If only one school moves, Mr. Murphy said Amigos is essentially the likely option because of building and enrollment logistics, as well as potential instructional and programmatic benefits.
    - The administration plans to present the three options with their respective advantages and disadvantages and gather community feedback during September. Mr. Murphy said a recommendation should not come much later than September/early October, although the exact timing of the building's availability—fall 2027 versus fall 2028—remains dependent on capital and procurement timelines.
    - **Member Hudson** stressed the need to provide families with clear information before or during the preschool lottery process.
    - **Member Harding** asked about the potential to expand access to Amigos and dual-language programming if the school moved to the larger facility. Mr. Murphy said increased access to dual-language programming would be a significant potential benefit and would be included in the analysis of options.

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Member Harding, the Rules were Suspended to bring forward **#26-177** on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

#26-177 Communications to Families of Decision Timeline for 158 Spring Street – Member Hudson & Member Harding

Since the December 2024 vote to close the Kennedy-Longfellow School, the Superintendent has taken the future of 158 Spring Street to the public repeatedly and on the record: At least four appearances before this Committee and its Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee (November 2025, March 18, 2026, April 7, 2026, and May 19, 2026), two community sessions open to all families (June 23, 2025, and the May 14, 2026), three publicly posted presentations, multiple CPS Connect notices, a direct email to Amigos families in June, and a standing project webpage.

What remains outstanding is a date by which a decision will be made. The school choice lottery for the 2027-2028 school year is expected to open in October 2026. Families entering that lottery will be ranking schools that could move, merge, or change, and families already enrolled at those schools face the same uncertainty.

To that end, the School Committee requests that the Superintendent communicate in writing to all Cambridge Public Schools parents, and to prospective families registering for the 2027-2028 school year, no later than the end of the first week of the 2026-2027 school year (September 4, 2026), a specific timeline for resolving the future programming of the 158 Spring Street facility. That timeline should include: (1) the date by which he will publish the recommended option or options for the facility; (2) the date by which he expects to bring a formal recommendation to the School Committee for a vote; and (3) the earliest school year in which any resulting change could take effect, with a plain-language statement of what the pending decision does and does not mean for families in the 2027-2028 lottery and for families currently enrolled at any school under consideration. If any date in the timeline later changes, the Superintendent should notify families of the new date and the reason as soon as practically possible.

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Member Harding, **#26-177** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

7b. Presentation

The Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer will be joined by representatives of Attuned Education Partners LLC who will provide an update on the ongoing development of the long-term strategic plan for the Cambridge Public Schools.

Dr. Heather Francis, Chief of Academics and Rachel Skerritt, Chief Strategy Officer at Attuned Education Partners, and joined the meeting and gave the following presentation that can be found on this website.
Highlights of the discussion include:

Strategic Planning Process

- The planning process has included review of district data, one-on-one interviews, 16 focus groups/listening sessions, classroom visits, and analysis of the Spring 2025 Panorama Survey.
- Initial community engagement was used to identify district strengths, challenges, aspirations, and potential priorities. A second phase of engagement will allow students, staff, caregivers, community partners, and others to respond to the draft framework.
- The final plan is intended to be specific and actionable and to function as both a work plan and an accountability tool for the district.

District Strengths Identified

- Commitment to organizational self-reflection and addressing inequities.
- Strong overall academic outcomes, including graduation rates, AP performance, college-going rates, and MCAS performance relative to peer districts.
- Positive classroom learning environments and strong student-teacher relationships.
- Investments in high-quality instructional materials in ELA and mathematics.
- Strong individual school communities and family engagement.

- Relatively stable teacher retention and staff attendance.
- Continued enrollment growth.

Challenges Identified

- Persistent and significant gaps in student outcomes, including disparities associated with student demographics and disability status.
- Student engagement concerns, particularly at the secondary level.
- Staff morale concerns, especially among district/central office staff.
- Disconnection within the central office and a need for greater organizational coherence.
- Continued need to strengthen family communication and partnership.

Draft Aspirations

The proposed long-term aspirations describe what CPS hopes will be true for every graduate over approximately the next ten years. The four areas presented were:

- **Equitable Access and Outcomes** – ensuring students have equitable access to enriching opportunities and individualized supports.
- **Strong Academic Foundation** – providing rigorous, engaging, standards-aligned instruction and developing literacy, content knowledge, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.
- **Personal Growth and Connection** – developing empathy, resilience, agency, relationships, belonging, and appreciation for diversity.
- **Purposeful Life and Leadership** – preparing graduates with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue college, career, and other life pathways and contribute to their communities.

The aspirations are intended to serve as the long-term "North Star" for the strategic plan.

Mission Measures

Attuned Education Partners recommended establishing approximately 10 student-focused "mission measures" that would function as a district report card and be reported annually to the School Committee. Measures should be understandable, measurable, comparable where possible, aligned with state accountability requirements, and accompanied by specific targets once the plan is finalized.

Potential measures discussed included:

- Student growth toward MCAS proficiency.
- Equitable participation in dual enrollment/early college opportunities.
- K–2 literacy benchmarks using DIBELS.
- Grades 3–8 and Grade 10 MCAS ELA and mathematics performance.
- Student access to grade-level, high-quality academic discourse.
- Student perceptions regarding inclusivity and diversity.
- Attendance of 90% or more of school days.
- Participation in internships/job placements.
- Community service participation.

Strategic Priorities

The administration presented four emerging strategic priority areas intended to organize the district's work over the four-year plan. Superintendent Murphy emphasized that the wording and ordering remain in development and that the district will ultimately need to narrow and sequence the initiatives rather than attempt to implement all proposed work simultaneously.

Ms.Skerritt explained that the next stage will involve narrowing the initiatives, determining which should occur in each year through 2029–2030, assigning responsibility for first-year action steps, establishing timelines, and developing measures for determining whether individual initiatives are successful.

School Committee Discussion

Vice Chair Dube

- Supported the overall direction of the four aspiration areas.
- Recommended supplementing MCAS measures with additional ways of evaluating student learning, particularly as the district considers Portrait of a Graduate, project-based learning, and graduation requirements.
- Supported the proposed use of classroom observations and qualitative measures and suggested considering how an observation rubric could connect with professional learning.
- Encouraged CPS to develop Cambridge-specific measures/questions rather than relying exclusively on Panorama comparisons.

- Noted that attendance is important but should not necessarily serve as the sole proxy for student engagement.

Membe de Paula Santos

- Echoed concerns about relying heavily on MCAS as a measure of academic achievement.
- Suggested exploring authentic/performance-based assessments, including models developed by the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment.
- Highlighted positive district data concerning staff attendance and academic achievement.

Mayor Siddiqui

- Suggested that the plan explicitly incorporate the Cambridge Preschool Program, noting the significant investment in the program and the importance of examining and incorporating the data being collected about its outcomes.

Member Harding

- Emphasized the importance of a highly professional teaching corps and consistently excellent classroom instruction.
- Stressed that student achievement and preparedness for college, careers, and trades should remain central measures of success.
- Noted that students will encounter standardized assessments and other objective measures beyond CPS and should be prepared accordingly.
- Expressed concern about the district's historical inconsistency in outcomes despite its ability to produce exceptional results when students receive strong instruction and support.
- Asked how and when the draft materials would be shared with the broader community and how additional community feedback would be solicited.

Member Hudson

- Questioned how the new strategic plan would differ from previous district plans and asked for examples of measurable goals from earlier plans that CPS had actually achieved.
- Mr. Murphy cited the launch of Universal Preschool, progress toward pre-pandemic ELA and mathematics achievement levels, completion of a long-term facilities condition assessment, professional learning work, and greater alignment around high-quality instructional materials as examples of progress from previous plans.

Next Steps

Mr. Murphy reiterated that the presentation represented draft components of a potential strategic plan, not a completed plan. The administration wanted the Committee to review the direction of the work before releasing the materials for broader community feedback. He also acknowledged that the current universe of proposed initiatives is too large and will need to be narrowed to allow for meaningful and sustainable implementation.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui **#26-162, #26-163, #26-164, #26-165, #26-166, #26-167, #26-168, #26-169, #26-170, #26-171, #26-173, #26-174** and **#26-175** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

#26-162 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows: That the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on attached list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund and/or grant fund budget.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	2	$283,050.56
Residential Program Tuition Contracts		
45 Day Program Contracts:		

Total	2	$283,050.56

#26-163 Recommendation: Contract Award: Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology, 41 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA for the period of September 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $70,916.00.

#26-164 Recommendation: Contract Award: Ensemble Music School LLC be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Ensemble Music School LL, 957 Great Plain Avenue, Needham, MA for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $301,752.46.

#26-165 Recommendation: Contract Award: Gerry's Music Shop be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Gerry's Music Shop, 80 Lamb Street, South Hadley, MA for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $68,424.35.

#26-166 Recommendation: Contract Award: US Foods, Inc. be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

US Foods, Inc., 8 Carnegie Row, Norwood, MA for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $25,000.00.

#26-167 Recommendation: Contract Award: PowerSchool Group LLC dba PowerSchool Holdings be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PowerSchool Group LLC dba PowerSchool Holdings, 150 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, CA for the period of September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027 in the amount of $35,184.69.

#26-168 Recommendation: Contract Award: Brightly Software be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Brightly Software, 11000 Regency Parkway, Suite 400, Cary, NC for the period of September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027 in the amount of $30,346.36.

#26-169 Recommendation: Contract Award: Scenario Learning dba Vector Solutions be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

Scenario Learning dba Vector Solutions, 4890 W. Kennedy Blvd, Suite 300, Tampa, FL for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $32,855.55.

#26-170 Recommendation: Contract Award: Panorama Education be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

Panorama Education, 24 School Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $27,705.00.

#26-171 Recommendation: Contract Award: Interpreters & Translators, Inc. be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

Interpreters & Translators, Inc., 232 Williams St, East Glastonbury, CT for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $78,000.00.

#26-173 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC26776) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY26 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC26776) - INCREASE through State – Targeted in the amount of $9,254,850.00 for the period of September 25, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

#26-174 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY27 Civics Teaching and Learning (SC27207) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY27 Civics Teaching and Learning (SC27207) – Trust in the amount of $59,640.00 for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

#26-175 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY27 Popplestone Foundation (SC27695) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY27 Popplestone Foundation (SC27695) Private in the amount of $294,311.89 for the period of July 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027

8. Non-Consent Agenda

#26-161 Recommendation: Approval of Revised Policy JKAA: Time-Out, Seclusion & Physical Restraint of Students (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve revisions to Policy JKAA: Time-Out, Seclusion, and Physical Restraint of Students.

A discussion followed **#26-161.**

Member DePaul Santos expressed support for the policy but raised concerns about whether restraint and seclusion practices are consistently implemented and accurately reported. She emphasized the importance of prevention and de-escalation strategies and asked how the district monitors implementation, ensures accurate reporting, and creates an environment where staff and families feel comfortable raising concerns. Mr. Murphy emphasized that violations of district policy, particularly those involving student safety, are taken seriously and investigated when brought to the administration's attention. Dr. Phillips outlined the district's training and monitoring efforts. Direct student-facing staff receive annual mandatory de-escalation training, and more than 200 staff members are fully Safety-Care trained. She also reported that the district implemented a uniform system across schools for tracking restraint data and reports. Dr. Phillips encouraged families to contact her immediately with concerns regarding conduct that may fall outside the policy, emphasizing that such concerns are taken seriously. Member Hudson emphasized the need to handle discussions of sensitive matters carefully and fairly, recognizing both the importance of raising concerns and the limitations on the district's ability to publicly discuss specific student or personnel matters.

Chair Weinstein suggested that the Special Education and Student Support Subcommittee may be an appropriate venue for a more in-depth discussion.

On a motion by Member Jaikumar, seconded by Member Hudson **#26-161** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

#26-172 Recommendation: Contract Award: Shore Educational Collaborative be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

> Shore Educational Collaborative, 11 Revere Beach Parkway, Chelsea, MA for the period of September 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of $489,000.00.

A discussion followed **#26-172.**

Member DePaul Santos expressed support for the initiative, particularly its potential to keep students requiring out-of-district placements closer to home and its partnership with a public collaborative. She asked why CPS is not currently able to provide this level of support internally and why the funding is being directed toward the Shore partnership rather than additional in-district special education programming. Mr. Murphy explained that CPS strives to provide programming that allows students to remain in district whenever possible, but some students have individualized needs that cannot currently be met within existing district programs. The program is intended primarily to support students with emotional impairment disabilities whose needs can interfere with their ability to access instruction. The partnership allows appropriate students to attend a specialized program located within Cambridge, helping families avoid the logistical challenges of placements outside the city while allowing students to maintain stronger connections with CPS and their community.

On a motion by Vice Chair Dube, seconded by Member Jaikumar **#26-172** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):

#26-178 High School Graduation Requirement – Member Jaikumar, Vice Chair Dube & Member de Paula Santos

WHEREAS: Passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System was a high school graduation requirement beginning in 2003, and between 2003 and 2019, Massachusetts saw virtually no improvement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress – either in overall scores or in reducing test score gaps; and
WHEREAS: In November 2024, Massachusetts voters ended the use of the MCAS as a requirement for high school graduation; and
WHEREAS: Following that vote, a K-12 Statewide Graduation Council was convened and has issued recommendations for new graduation requirements; and
WHEREAS: A Massachusetts Association of School Committees position paper on a substantially similar draft of proposed graduation requirements opposed key elements, including state-administered end-of-course assessments to replace the state-administered assessment already rejected by voters, as well as the completion of government student financial aid forms. The MASC also supported some elements of the proposed graduation requirements only if implemented with local flexibility and/or full funding; and
WHEREAS: The MASC called for full state funding of capstones or portfolios "because they are better aligned to the Graduation Council's own Vision of a Massachusetts Graduate." Further, "The state should provide frameworks, model rubrics, guidance, professional development, and funding. Implementation and grading, however, must remain local. Capstones and portfolios should strengthen the diploma and deepen student learning while preserving local authority and flexibility over how students demonstrate mastery."; and
WHEREAS: That Vision of a Massachusetts Graduate calls for students to finish high school as Academically Prepared, Critical Problem-Solvers, Self-Aware Navigators, Intentional Collaborators, Effective Communicators, and

Responsible Decision-Makers – all important aspirations that would call for continued educational excellence across Massachusetts; now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee endorses the Vision of a Massachusetts Graduate and the May 2026 MASC position paper on The Graduation Standard; and be it further
RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee opposes the K-12 Statewide Graduation Council's call to limit local flexibility and override the will of the voters by replacing one high-stakes state-controlled assessment with another; and be it further
RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee calls on the state to fully fund any new graduation requirements, while respecting the Massachusetts tradition of local flexibility.

A discussion followed **#26-178.**

- **Member Ajaikumar** explained that the motion was intended to support MASC's position, oppose unfunded or inflexible state mandates, and preserve local control over graduation requirements. He referenced the 2024 vote eliminating MCAS as a graduation requirement and argued that portfolios, capstone projects, and other authentic assessments could better reflect the broad skills identified in the Vision of a Massachusetts Graduate.
- **Member Harding** opposed the motion, expressing concern that moving away from standardized assessments could lower expectations and disproportionately affect vulnerable students. He argued that external assessments provide accountability and questioned whether effective alternative assessment systems have been developed.
- **Member Hudson** emphasized the importance of an external standard, noting that without one, the district would effectively be evaluating its own performance. She expressed concern about students advancing or graduating without having mastered necessary academic skills and said independent measures provide an important accountability mechanism.
- **Member DePalma Santos** rejected the characterization that alternatives to standardized testing represent lower standards. She championed for more meaningful measures of student achievement that recognize a broader range of knowledge, abilities, and ways for students to demonstrate learning.
- **Vice Chair Dube** agreed that students should be held to high standards but questioned whether a state-designed end-of-course assessment adequately measures what graduates should know and be able to do. She expressed support for richer assessments developed by educators and noted that student learning encompasses skills and qualities that cannot be captured by a single standardized test.
- **Mayor Siddiqui** said she understood the intent of the motion and the desire for local flexibility but questioned the practical impact of adopting a resolution on an issue ultimately determined at the state level. She suggested the Committee should remain focused on policymaking and actions within its direct control.
- **Chair Weinstein** clarified that the motion would not establish CPSD graduation requirements. He supported MASC's position and emphasized that state requirements should serve as a floor rather than a ceiling, with Cambridge continuing to determine how best to meet and potentially exceed those requirements for its students.
- **Superintendent Murphy** noted that the issue directly relates to the district's ongoing work regarding high school competency standards. He expressed concern about the ability of school districts statewide to maintain consistently high standards under purely local control, noting that local flexibility for Cambridge would necessarily mean similar flexibility for every district in Massachusetts

On a motion by Vice Chair Dube, seconded by Member Jaikumar **#26-178** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, NAY; Member Hudson, NAY; Chair Weinstein, YEA

The meeting was approaching 10:00 p.m.

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Member Jaikumar the meeting was extended to 10:15 p.m. on the roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

Vice Chair Dube left the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

#26-176 School Climate Subcommittee Report – June 18, 2026

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Member Jaikumar **#26-176** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, ABSENT; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

10. Resolutions

#26-179 Honoring Christopher Anne Affleck – Member Harding
WHEREAS: Deep sorrow fills the hearts of members of the City of Cambridge School Committee with the passing of Christopher Anne Affleck, the announcement of which we profoundly felt. We pause to reflect and consider her life and worth of her achievements to the youth in our community and as we continue to gain inspiration of a dear teacher/friend/mother; and
WHEREAS: Chris Anne Affleck was an admired and influential City of Cambridge School Teacher, and also an Activist Organizer and a staunch advocate for Civil Rights, thus her activist spirit was woven into her robust social life she kept with her peers. She taught literacy classes and carried these values into all her classrooms. She had a keen sense of social justice; and
WHEREAS: Chris Anne Affleck in her dedication to her duties utilized her ability to educate, inspire and encourage, being a guide to the knowledge of constitutional rights and to take lawful action thereof; and
WHEREAS: Chris Anne Affleck saw the need and not the cause to extending knowledge to students, parents and members of the community to ensure all of their political, educational and social equality among all citizens; and
WHEREAS: The influence of Chris Anne Affleck and her adherence to her leadership earned her the highest regard and utmost respect from all her peers; and
WHEREAS: Chris Anne Affleck was the proud mother of famed Academy Award winners, native Cantabrigians Ben and Casey Affleck, both of whom attended Cambridge Public Schools, and graduates of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School; now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That The City of Cambridge School Committee assures the bereaved family of our deep and heartfelt sympathy and trust that they will be comforted with the peace of accepted sorrow; and be it further
RESOLVED: That while we pause to pay tribute to Christopher Anne Affleck, we will cherish fond memories and appreciation of all her hard work and timeless hours he shared with our youth. We give thanks for her life and gentle nature that endeared her to the community; and be it further
RESOLVED: That Christopher Anne Affleck will always be remembered and valued for her input in the education of our children, and all the lives that she has touched. May she enjoy eternal rest and the rewards she has earned; and be it further
RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution be inscribed to the memory of Christopher Anne Affleck in the archives of the City of Cambridge School Committee.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui, **#26-179** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, ABSENT; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

11. Announcements: There were no announcements.

12. Late Orders:

Honoring Larry Aaronson – Chair Weinstein, Mayor Siddiqui and Member Harding
WHEREAS: Larry Aaronson, a beloved Cambridge educator and life-long champion of public education, passed away on August 1, 2026, at the age of 86, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of teaching, advocacy, and service to generations of Cambridge public school students; and
WHEREAS: Born in Washington, D.C., Larry Aaronson began his career as a teacher during the height of the Vietnam War, a period that profoundly influenced his belief that public education was the most powerful response to the ethical and moral challenges of the time and an essential foundation for a more just and democratic society; and

WHEREAS: Larry moved to Cambridge to pursue doctoral studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he deepened his commitment to the transformative power of public education and embraced the principles of public education as a means of social liberation; and
WHEREAS: In 1977, Larry joined Cambridge Public Schools as a history and social studies teacher at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS), where he specialized in alternative progressive education and social justice, inspiring generations of students until his retirement in 2007 to engage thoughtfully with history and current events and to recognize their own capacity to create positive change; and
WHEREAS: So profound was Larry Aaronson's impact that, upon his retirement, colleagues, family members, former students, and their parents established the Aaronson Fund to continue supporting the values and educational opportunities he championed; now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee extend their deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Larry Aaronson and honor his extraordinary legacy as an educator, mentor, and advocate for public education; and be it further
RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to prepare suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the family of Larry Aaronson on behalf of the Cambridge School Committee.

On a motion by Chair Weinstein, seconded by Member Jaikumar, the **Late Order** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, ABSENT; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None

On a motion by Member Jaikumar, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui, the meeting was adjourned on the following roll call vote: Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, ABSENT; Member Harding, ABSENT; Member Hudson, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA (10:06 p.m.)

Email Communications:

- ✓ Anne Coburn
- ✓ Richard Goldberg
- ✓ Kathy Greeley
- ✓ Nella LaRosa-Waters
- ✓ Shelley Rieman
- ✓ Jessie Wenning
- ✓ Sheli Wortis

Attest:
Katherine Christo
Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee